

cooperation throughout the alliance and give U.S. Cyber Command the resources to disrupt, deter, and defeat cyber aggression.

The legislation before us sends a clear message to our men and women in uniform. It tells them that we have their backs. After years of uncertain funding and arbitrary funding limits, we have their backs. In the face of diverse and evolving threats, we have their backs.

When I vote, I will do it to tell the brave Kentuckians serving at home and abroad that we have their backs. I hope that each of our colleagues will do the same.

This bill was crafted in a thorough, bipartisan committee process and was modified to include more than 40 amendments. I look forward to concluding our consideration and passing this NDAA very soon.

TAX REFORM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, there has been no shortage of recent reporting on the economic progress that is flooding across our country. Take a New York Times headline from earlier this month: "We Ran Out of Words to Describe How Good the Jobs Numbers Are."

Let me say that again. This is from the New York Times: "We Ran Out of Words to Describe How Good the Jobs Numbers Are."

This is from a Wall Street Journal editorial:

The U.S. economy is picking up speed, and it's paying dividends in an expanding job market. . . . President Trump's tax reform and deregulation agenda appears to be working.

And here is a welcome development for America's parents:

Workers age 25 to 34 made up 1.04 million of the 2.58 million jobs added over the last year. Job and wage growth may finally be inducing young people to move out of their parents' basements.

More jobs, more wage growth, more opportunities for middle-class Americans—it is good news, plain and simple.

Well, apparently, it is not so simple for our friends across the aisle. While Republicans and the rest of the country are cheering on this new prosperity for working families, our Democratic friends are trying to pretend that the facts don't matter and things aren't actually getting better.

Here is how the leader of the House Democrats, the distinguished Congresswoman from San Francisco, tried to sarcastically brush away the facts a few days ago:

Hip, hip, hooray, unemployment is down! What does that mean to me?

I couldn't make this up. "Hip, hip, hooray," she scoffs. Unemployment is at an 18-year low, the fewest Americans on unemployment insurance since 1973, and Democratic leadership can't quite fathom why this would matter for American families and small busi-

ness owners. I know plenty of families and job creators in Kentucky who would be happy to explain.

Texas Roadhouse is a restaurant chain based in Louisville that employs more than 2,500 Kentuckians. They shared recently that tax reform will allow them to invest in their company, customers, and employees. Plus, this economic climate has them planning to open 30–30—new locations across the country next year. Maybe the new cooks and wait staff at 30 new restaurants could explain to the House Democratic leader why a falling unemployment rate is a victory for American families.

Just today, Glier's Meats in Covington, KY, is sharing similar good news. Tax reform is enabling this small business, famous for its German-inspired sausage, to make life better for its nearly 30 employees and plant deeper roots in Kenton County. Since the new law passed in December, Glier's has been able to make capital investments, including new machinery, which is critical to the daily operations of the business. They have been able to resume offering comprehensive health benefits, which it had to give up 6 years ago as costs soared under ObamaCare. They have been able to significantly increase employees' wages, and they are on track to hire five new workers in the coming months.

Our Kentucky State treasurer, Allison Ball, had it just right. She said in a recent column: "Kentuckians have immediately benefited from federal tax reform."

These immediate benefits are only the beginning. More and more stories like these are being written all the time as tax reform, regulatory reform, and the rest of Republicans' opportunity agenda continue helping American workers and job creators.

There are transformative new equipment purchases for Main Street small businesses, pay raises for hard-working middle-class employees, and new job openings all over the country so that new workers who are just starting out have more opportunities, and midcareer professionals who have been on the sidelines have the opportunity to clock back in.

Unlike leading Democrats, apparently, Republicans don't need it explained to us why this news matters to workers and families. It is exactly what we hoped to achieve. It is exactly the result that our policies were meant to produce.

The distinction could not be more clear. On one side of the aisle are those who mock multithousand-dollar tax reform bonuses as "crumbs," who can't grasp why an 18-year low in employment would matter to American families, and on the other side of the aisle are those of us who have helped make it happen.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 5895

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The leader is correct.

The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5895) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRUMP-KIM SUMMIT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I rise today briefly to thank President Trump. I want to thank him for our summit with North Korea in Singapore.

Only Nixon could go to China, and I think only Trump could go to North Korea. I understand that he went to Singapore, but you get the point. It is a beginning. It is a baby step, but it was an important step, and I want to thank President Trump for taking it.

Certainly, there is nothing in the history of Kim Jong Un or his father or his grandfather that would cause us to be optimistic. So I think the President and all Americans are entering into this discourse with eyes wide open.

We also know that Kim Jong Un is not coming to the table out of the goodness of his heart. President Trump and the U.S. Congress have hit him with sanctions, and we have hit him so hard that he is coughing up bones. I hate to do that to the people of North Korea, but we had no choice.

I think Kim Jong Un is coming to the table also because he understands that, for the first time in a long time, America means what it says and a military option is on the table. He saw what happened to Assad in Syria, not once but twice.

So we enter into this discourse with North Korea, as I said, with eyes wide open. An old comedian once said that sincerity is everything. Fake that, and you got it made.

Well, we don't know whether Kim Jong Un is sincere yet. We will probably find out when the President asks

for authority to send in inspectors from America to inventory Kim Jong Un's nuclear arsenal, his nuclear technology, and his missile technology. If the answer is "no, we can't do that," or if Kim Jong Un takes evasive measures to try to hide his weaponry, then, we will know, but we will have tried.

I want to thank President Trump today on behalf of all Americans who believe in peace for the successful start of what I hope will be a successful summit and relationship with North Korea.

Thank you, President Trump.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRUMP-KIM SUMMIT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, talks between President Trump and Chairman Kim in Singapore, as we all know, concluded yesterday. Certainly, we are all heartened to see the two leaders engage in a dialogue. We feel much better when both President Trump and Chairman Kim are talking rather than trading insults and military threats. We all want this diplomacy to succeed.

But now that the dust is settling after the Singapore summit, three things are clear. No. 1, Chairman Kim achieved far more than President Trump did. No. 2, our adversaries, Russia and China, have gained while our allies, like South Korea and Japan, have lost footing and some degree of faith in America's reliability. No. 3, the summit was much more show than substance—what the Texans call "all cattle and no hat."

Let me elaborate. In past agreements with North Korea, the United States won far stronger language on denuclearization, and we won specific measures to ensure that North Korea was taking steps in that direction. Of course, even with the stronger language, the North Korean regime repeatedly backtracked from previous American-led agreements.

The joint statement in Singapore includes none of the concrete details that could make an ambitious goal like "complete denuclearization" close to meaningful. Chairman Kim did not even mention his ambiguous comment to denuclearize when he returned home to North Korea. It was absent in all the North Korean press. Often you can tell how a leader feels from what they tell their people, not what they say publicly to the world. In this case, denuclearization was not even mentioned.

Still, President Trump tweeted this morning "there is no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea." What planet is the President on? Saying it doesn't make it so. North Korea still has nuclear weapons. It still has ICBMs. It still has the United States in danger.

Somehow, President Trump thinks that when he says something, it becomes reality—if it were only that easy, only that simple. That is what stood in the way of making this meeting more meaningful.

It is not show. It is not verbiage. It is action. President Trump, in his actions, did things that President Kim wanted. I don't know what President Kim has done that we want, other than show up, which was a benefit for him.

President Trump agreed to freeze joint military exercises with South Korea, and he called them "provocations"—right out of the North Korean propaganda playbook—without the knowledge of South Korea or our own military. I guarantee that our military men and women were squirming when President Trump called our joint military exercises "provocations."

These exercises and others that the military conduct around the world are designed to ensure that our service-members are fully trained and ready for action. They are not a provocation, President Trump.

Adopting the North Korean view on American military exercises, which President Trump did, is nothing short of a public relations coup for Chairman Kim. It seems that President Trump didn't even think it through or consult with anybody. You cannot do this stuff on the fly. Saying that the danger from North Korea is over doesn't make it so. Saying that these are provocations makes things worse. You cannot do it on the fly. You need serious thought because it has consequences. If Chairman Kim walked away from these negotiations thinking that it is easy to deal with President Trump, Kim might think: I get what I want, and I don't have to give him anything. That doesn't bode well for the future.

In the final tabulation, after all the pomp and circumstance has faded, it seems clear that Chairman Kim walked away the victor, unfortunately. What President Trump achieved on behalf of the United States is unclear and difficult to certify. What Chairman Kim achieved for North Korea is tangible and lasting.

No doubt, our Republican friends would be up in arms if a Democratic President walked away from a summit with so little to show for it. But, of course, while we haven't heard full-throated praise from our Republican side—their reactions have been kind of lukewarm—it is not close to the criticism they launched at President Obama in similar situations.

In the weeks and months ahead, President Trump and his team need to focus on securing real and enduring concessions from the North Koreans on plutonium and uranium enrichment, on the destruction of nuclear infrastructure, on an "anywhere, anytime" inspections regime, and the unambiguous end of missile testing.

These are the things that make a strong nuclear agreement. Unfortu-

nately, the Singapore summit produced none of them and talked about none of them. We hope that in the future that changes for the safety of America, but, again, the emphasis on showmanship as opposed to substance will not serve America or the prospects for peace well in the long run.

On one final point, congressional oversight and involvement is critical to this process. Secretary Pompeo needs to make clear what the process moving forward includes and what, if any, additional agreements were made in Singapore. Congress needs to learn the terms for any sanctions relief, whether U.S. troop presence in Korea was discussed and whether any agreement will include a halt to North Korea's key missile programs.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, on healthcare. Even as North Korea dominates the headlines, Democrats are going to continue to focus on the No. 1 issue on the minds of most Americans: healthcare.

Insurers in State after State are announcing double-digit premium increases and blaming Republican healthcare policies for the increase. Now, amazingly, the Trump administration is refusing to defend the constitutionality of protections for Americans with preexisting conditions, turning its back on the most popular and most humane advancement in our healthcare system.

Imagine the return of the days when a mother with a child who has cancer can no longer find affordable care for her daughter and the days when hard-working Americans who fall on hard times are made to suffer and denied healthcare coverage, precisely because they need it so desperately. How wrong, how backward, and how immoral that system was, and that is where President Trump wants to take us again.

So we Democrats are going to spend the next few months, including the August work period, focusing on the critical issue of the Nation's healthcare system. We will be trying to get premiums down, costs down, and better healthcare, not the deterioration we have seen under President Trump and the Republican congressional leadership.

We are going to focus on all that our Republican friends have done to drive up the costs of healthcare on average Americans and what we should be doing to reverse that awful trend.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE IG REPORT

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, there is the IG report. Tomorrow, the inspector general of the Justice Department will release a report about the Department's handling of an investigation of Secretary Clinton in 2016. We look forward to the report and learning what it has to say.